

Provide Recreation for America

“America has turned to its public lands for escape and recreation since 1872, when Congress designated Yellowstone as the Nation’s first pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people.”

The Department of the Interior provides recreational opportunities on federal lands. It also provides leadership and coordination and serves as a catalyst for recreation efforts by state and local governments and the private sector.

Federal lands provide outstanding recreational opportunities, including hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, driving off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, and birding. Interior continues to promote and provide recreational opportunities that are consistent with other land uses and with maintaining the health of the land.

Interior-managed lands support tremendous recreational use. In 2000, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands had approximately 54 million visits and the National Wildlife Refuge System and the National Fish Hatchery System about 38 million visits. In 1999 (the most recent year available), the National Park Service had an estimated 286 million recreational visits. The Bureau of Reclamation also provides visitors with water-based recreation opportunities at more than 300 reservoirs in the 17 western states. Annually, there are approximately 80 million recreation visits to Reclamation facilities. The total economic impact of recreational activities on Interior lands is enormous, contributing billions of dollars and thousands of jobs annually to the U.S. economy.

Interior is committed to providing access to public lands and enhancing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the benefits of our Nation’s heritage. Adequate funding of the national parks, wildlife refuges, and other public lands will continue to be a high priority. Increased entrance fees at many of the larger “destination” parks and recreation areas may begin to address the funding and infrastructure problems that persist.

In 2000, the Department employed the following strategies to achieve the goal of providing recreation for America:

- Offered “one-stop shopping” for recreational information and services through the inter-agency federal recreation web site, www.recreation.gov;
- Supplemented appropriations through increased revenues and cost recovery for services;
- Expanded the use of volunteers and actively enrolled groups and associations;
- Increased concession revenue and expanded concession opportunities while ensuring that the returns the federal government receives reflect fair market value;
- Established partnerships and collaborative efforts to encourage protection of “areas of national significance” such as national trails, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, and heritage areas that cross jurisdictional lines;
- Helped states, tribes, territories, and nonprofit groups promote recreation; and
- Provided grants to states, tribes, and localities for recreation acquisition and development.

The major departmental activities to achieve the goal of providing recreation for America are shown in *Figure 6*.

Figure 6

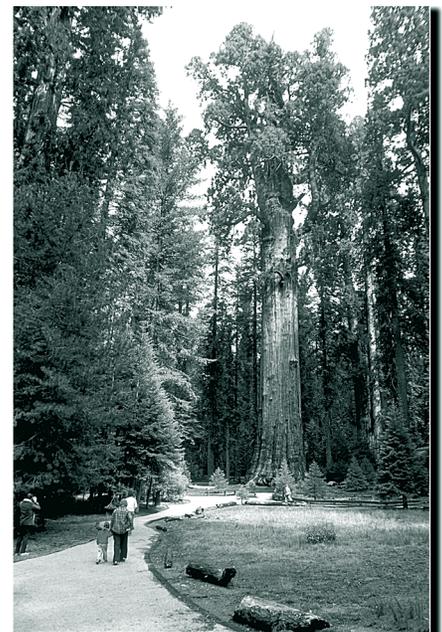
Goal 2 – Provide Recreation for America	
GPRA Program Activity	2000 Expenses (\$ in millions)
1. Visitor Enjoyment at National Park Facilities	\$1,447
2. Public Use and Enjoyment of Fish and Wildlife Resources	177
3. Opportunities for Environmentally Responsible Recreation on Public Lands	61
4. Recreation Opportunities Through Partnerships	204
5. Reclamation Land Management and Development	34
Total - Goal 2	\$1,923

Visitor Enjoyment at National Park Facilities

Desired Result: *Provide for the enjoyment of National Park Service resources in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*

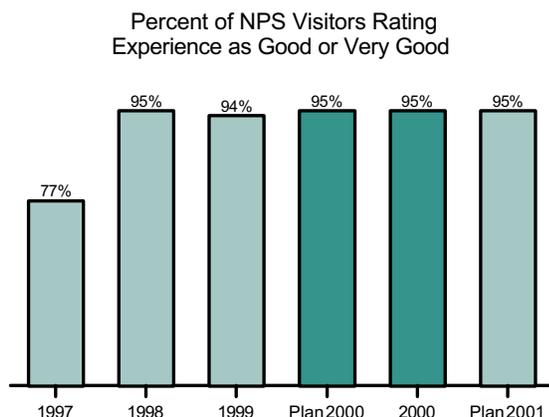
The National Park Service manages nationally significant battlefields, parks, historic sites, monuments, lakeshores, memorials, parkways, preserves, recreation areas, riverways, and seashores. National park areas have long been favorite destinations for millions of Americans as well as people from around the world. It is estimated that there were 286 million recreation visits to America's national parks in 2000. To fulfill the NPS mission to make America's national parks available for public enjoyment and inspiration, the Park Service provides an array of activities, opportunities, and visitor services that allow the public to use and enjoy the National Park System safely and with minimum impact to resources. Enjoyment of the park units and their resources is a fundamental part of the visitor experience. Visitor enjoyment and safety are affected by the quality of park programs, facilities, and services, whether provided by the National Park Service, a concessionaire, or a contractor. Knowledge about the people who visit these NPS areas has become increasingly important because of the need to know if visitor expectations are being met.

Performance Measure: One mechanism for determining how well the NPS is serving the public is through findings of the NPS Visitor Services Project (VSP). The VSP is an ongoing research project that utilizes two main survey tools to provide the NPS with valuable visitor feedback: in-depth visitor studies and a customer satisfaction card. Since 1988, the VSP has conducted in-depth visitor studies in 91 units of the National Park System. Approximately 10 studies are done each year. Because regular surveys are needed by park managers to better manage the visitor experience, the NPS adopted the Visitor Survey Card (VSC) as a means for assessing visitor satisfaction at all of the parks rather than just a few each year. The results from the VSC Project are used by park managers to improve facilities and services and better support the visitor experience. The more in-depth VSP surveys will continue to be conducted to collect visitor information, determine policy issues, gauge visitor use trends, and determine current visitor needs. The long-term goal by 2005 is to ensure that 95 percent of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.



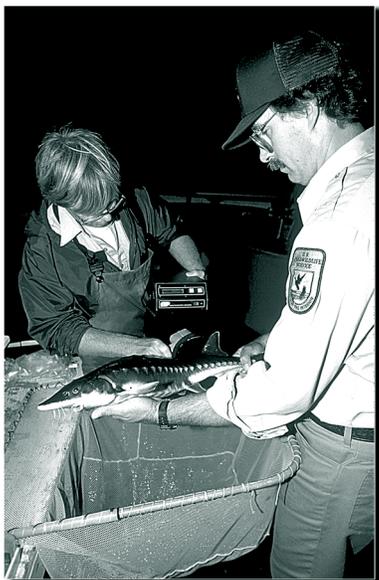
Providing for visitor enjoyment requires balancing the intrinsic value of a park with safe public access, appropriate facilities, information, and necessary visitor services (photo by NPS).

2000 Results: Based on data received to date, NPS has projected that the results of annual surveys for visitor satisfaction indicate a 95 percent satisfaction rate. The projected 95 percent satisfaction rate meets the target that was established in 2000.



Public Use and Enjoyment of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Desired Result: Provide the public with opportunities to understand and participate in the conservation and use of fish and wildlife resources.



Private citizens, whose voluntary participation in fish and wildlife protection efforts have laid a foundation on which the FWS operates today, have much to contribute to the continuing conservation of fish and wildlife resources (photo by FWS).

The Nation's ability to sustain ecosystems, and the natural heritage of fish and wildlife resources within them, will increasingly depend on the public's active participation in the stewardship of these resources. A growing number of American citizens lack the firsthand experience with fish and wildlife resources in their natural settings that past generations enjoyed. The growing diversity of the Nation's population introduces many new population groups to this country that also lack firsthand experience with American fish and wildlife resources. These factors and others offer a challenge for the FWS to provide environmental information so that the public understands how their well-being is linked to the well-being of fish and wildlife populations and their habitat. Creating a more knowledgeable public should help improve the conservation of fish and wildlife in habitats throughout the country.

Performance Measure: Approximately 98 percent of the land in the National Wildlife Refuge System is open to the public for wildlife-dependent education and recreation. Refuges are places where visitors can observe, learn about, and enjoy plants and animals in natural surroundings. The recently enacted *National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act* expands opportunities for six primary public uses for refuges: wildlife photography, fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, environmental education, and interpretation. The long-term goal by 2005 is to increase compatible, wildlife-dependent recreational visits to National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries by 20 percent over the 1997 level.

2000 Results: The total number of visits to National Wildlife Refuges and National Fish Hatcheries was 37,905,234, an increase of three percent over the 1999 level. This three percent increase exceeded the 2000 performance target of two percent.

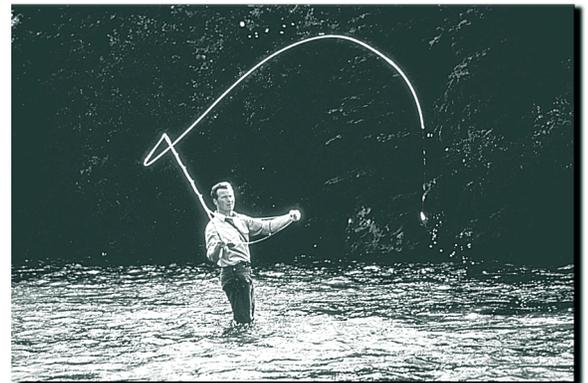
	1997	1998	1999	Plan 2000	2000	Plan 2001
Percent increase in interpretive, educational, and recreational visits	% 33,206,404	6% 35,341,846	4% 36,803,070	2% 37,539,131	3% 37,905,234	2% 38,289,914

Opportunities for Environmentally Responsible Recreation on Public Lands

Desired Result: Provide the public with diverse opportunities to recreate on the public lands while maintaining the lands and facilities in good environmental condition.

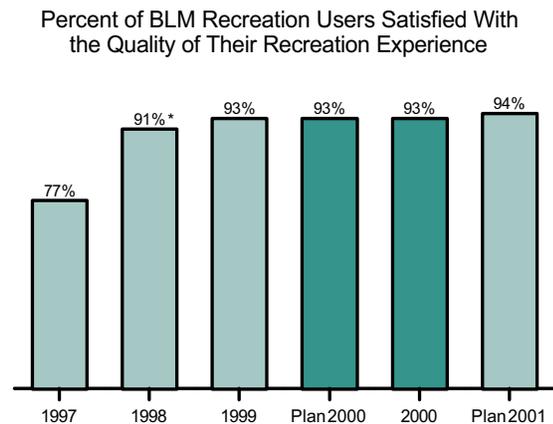
The public lands provide visitors with a wide array of recreational opportunities. These include hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, operating off-highway vehicles, mountain biking, birding, and visiting natural and cultural heritage sites. The BLM provides these opportunities where they are compatible with other authorized land uses, while minimizing risks to public health and safety and maintaining the health and diversity of the land.

Performance Measure: As urbanization of the West continues and the American public's desire to recreate increases, BLM's recreation areas will experience greater usage. This increased usage requires greater management of and investment in BLM recreation areas and will inevitably increase the expectation of the American public regarding the quality of their recreation experience. The BLM uses a national survey of recreation users to obtain information on customer satisfaction with the quality of their recreation experience. The long-term goal by 2005 is to ensure that 90 percent of recreation users are satisfied with the quality of their recreation experience on the public lands.



More than 90 percent of American people participate in some form of outdoor recreation (photo by BLM).

2000 Results: The BLM exceeded its performance target for 2000 as 94 percent of BLM recreation users were satisfied with the quality of their recreation experience.

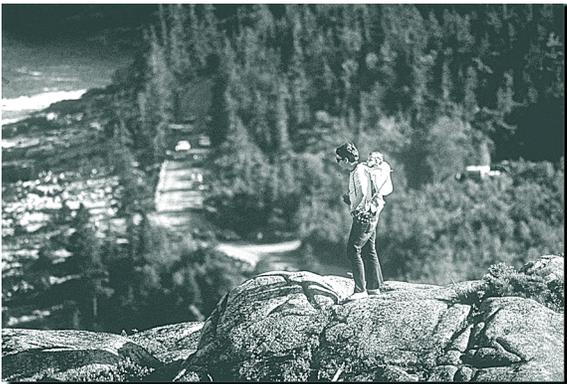


* In 1998, satisfaction survey was conducted only at premiere recreation fee sites.

Recreation Opportunities Through Partnerships

Desired Result: Strengthen and preserve natural and cultural resources and enhance recreational opportunities managed by partners.

The National Park Service implements a broad range of programs that assist others to preserve our natural and cultural and recreational resources. These programs encompass formal partnership programs with over 60 other federal agencies, 59 states and territories, more than 1,000 local governments, over 300 Indian tribes, foreign governments, private organizations, friends groups, academic institutions, and the general public. The NPS strives to increase the number of significant historic and archaeological properties protected and to improve customer satisfaction with technical assistance provided by the Park Service.



Parks with the highest individual visitation totals are parkways and recreational areas near major urban areas, but other types of parks are also popular destinations. The top 25 visited units account for 50 percent of visitation (photo by NPS).

Performance Measure: The National Park Service helps communities find appropriate strategies for protecting trail corridors, open space resources, rivers and watersheds, and historic and cultural resources that define their sense of place. The Park Service becomes involved when formally asked by local officials, landowners, and other citizens who share the desire to protect or to improve their communities. The NPS also brings technical expertise in public involvement, publications, organization building, project design, and site restoration. All projects are founded on cost-sharing, cooperation, and community initiative. Projects are implemented largely using local, state, and private funds, with NPS assistance typically leveraged many times over. The long-term goal by 2005 is to conserve an additional 4,200 miles of trails, an additional 6,600 miles of protected river corridors, and an additional 223,200 acres of parks and open space, compared to 1997 totals, with NPS assistance.

2000 Results: Based on information provided by state and local partners, nearly 6,270 miles of trails (241 percent of target), 2,540 linear miles of river corridor (121 percent of target), and 655,500 acres of park and open space (1,069 percent of target) were added. This tremendous increase in park and open space acreage resulted from significant increases reported by Alaska and National Heritage lands.

	1997	1998	1999	Plan 2000	2000	Plan 2001
Miles of recreational trails added	N/A	700	2,116	2,600	6,270	3,100
Miles of recreational river corridor added	N/A	1,100	1,504	2,100	2,540	2,850
Acres of recreational park land added	N/A	33,700	45,425	61,300	655,500	93,300

Reclamation Land Management and Development

Desired Result: Provide the greatest overall benefit from existing land resources in a manner that is efficient and effective, uses sound conservation practices, and protects the environment.

The Bureau of Reclamation strives to manage lands in cooperation with others to improve, protect, and enhance land use, cultural, recreational, and environmental values. Using an ecosystem-based management approach, Reclamation assures that lands are managed in an economically and environmentally sound manner to benefit the American people.

Performance Measure: The Bureau of Reclamation provides recreational opportunities on project lands and waters, including fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, biking, and picnicking, among other activities. Reclamation meets its recreation management objectives through direct management, contracts with concessionaires, and partnerships with state and local governments, the private sector, and other federal agencies. Reclamation conducts recreation compliance reviews to ensure that recreation facilities are in good condition, and that they are being managed in accordance with safety and health standards, concession agreements, and Reclamation policies. By 2005, Reclamation's goal is to improve the quality of its recreation areas by completing recreational compliance reviews, action plans, and 50 percent of identified corrective actions.



Over 80 percent of Reclamation-owned recreation facilities are managed by others, including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service (photo by Reclamation).

2000 Results: Reclamation exceeded the targets established for 2000 by completing 33 percent of the recreational compliance reviews (64 areas) and 26 percent of the action plans, which cover 51 areas.

	1997 *	1998 *	1999 *	Plan 2000	2000	Plan 2001
Percent of completed recreation compliance reviews (cumulative)	N/A	N/A	N/A	15%	33%	97 **
Percent of areas with recreation action plans	N/A	N/A	N/A	15%	26%	10%

* These performance indicators are new for 2000; therefore data for 1997 to 1999 is not available.

** This performance indicator is being changed from a percent to a number in 2001 to demonstrate the scope of the reservoirs being reviewed.